


Truro Rural District Council.



PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

FOR 1938

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Medical Officer of Health.



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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT YEAR 1938

Public Health Officers. Medical Officer. Part time, holds diploma of Public Health, is also District Medical Officer, Perranzabuloe District and Public Vaccinator for Perranzabuloe and St. Allen Parishes.

Sanitary Inspector. Mr. E. R. C. Harvey, Associate Royal Sanitary Institute, whole time. Appointed Meat Inspector under the 1924 Public Health Meat Regulations. Inspector under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926. Inspector under County of Cornwall Act, 1929. (Ice Cream).

Mr. F. Pickering, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., whole time, Housing Inspector.

The salaries of the first two are contributed to by the Ministry, under the Public Health Acts, or by Exchequer grants.

To the Chairman and Members of the

Rural District Council of Truro.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of your district for 1938.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Area 106,504 acres.

Population :—

The estimated mid population for 1938 was 23,770. This shews no change from 23,760 the figure for 1937.

The continued popularity of the district as a summer holiday resort makes the provision of accommodation and catering for the visitors the most important occupation for the residents. The mild and equable climate attracts many elderly and invalide people to live in it. Hence the population continues to be to a large extent, elderly with a consequent low birth rate and high crude death rate.

Little mining is being carried on in the area and no large water or drainage schemes to give work to the unemployed.

The conditions of farming remain much as in 1937, men tending to leave rather than go on the land. Hence there is still a tendency for the more enterprising young people to go abroad.

It is essential that, there is adequate water and good drainage in all the seaside resorts and that scavenging is regularly carried out in order that the amenities of the district may be maintained and the summer influx of visitors ensured. The cost of these services is considerable but the return should be well worth while.

At the time of the National emergency in the autumn large numbers of people came into the district and would again in case of need and this would no doubt be one of the main duties of the residents of the area the housing of evacuated children and others. In addition many come forward and commenced First Aid courses etc. in order to be better equipped to help. The response was very good and it is to be hoped that these and others will continue to carry on the work and become efficient in case of a National emergency.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births :—	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Legitimate	336	166	170
Illegitimate	16	9	7
Totals	352	175	177

Live Birth Rate :—14·8 per 1,000 of the population.

A very welcome improvement from 12·8 in 1937 and almost equals that of the Country as a whole at 15·1. The number is equally divided between the two sexes.

Live births, are more numerous than deaths, a much more satisfactory condition than previously.

Illegitimate Live Birth Rate 45 per 1,000 live births.

The presence of Rosemundy Home in the area has to be considered when reviewing these figures.

STILL BIRTHS :—	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	5	2	7
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	5	2	7

Still Birth Rate :—·38 per 1,000 of the population a satisfactory rate when compared with ·60 the figure for the whole country. This year, one as against five of these deaths were of illegitimate children.

Death :—	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
	169	175	344

Crude Death Rate :—14·5 per 1,000 of the population.

The drop from 16 in 1937 is a welcome one although the present rate is slightly above the rate of the previous few years. Male and female deaths are almost equal.

With such a large proportion of elderly people among the population. The crude death rate is not a true figure for comparison with the rate for England as a whole or other areas in which the percentage of young and old people may be very different. Adjusting the rate for this variation it is found that :—

Adjusted Death Rate is 10·8 which gives a very satisfactory figure in comparison with 11·6 the figure for the country as a whole

The local adjusted death rate ratio to the national crude death rate is thus ·93 or a mortality 7% below that of the country as a whole.

Death of Infants under 1 year of age :—

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Legitimate	10	6	16
Illegitimate	1	—	1
Infantile Mortality Rate 48 per 1,000 live births.			

This rate compares with 53 for the country as a whole and shows a big decrease from the year previous, which was 59.

The following death rates for certain diseases are worthy of comparison with those of the County as a whole ; being the rate per 1,000 of the population,

Measles	—	England and Wales	·04
Scarlet Fever	--	„	·01
Whooping Cough	—	„	·03
Diphtheria	—	„	·07
Influenza	·04	„	·11
Diorrhœa, Infants	—	„	5·5 per
under 2 years			1,000 live births

The absence of deaths from the common infectious diseases as recorded above is very welcome.

Heart disease accounts for almost one third of the total deaths and cancer for just under one seventh a reduction from the previous years figure ; tuberculosis with the same number of deaths accounts for a slightly higher proportion owing to there being fewer total deaths from all causes.

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 live and still births
Puerperal Sepsis	—	—
Other Puerperal causes	1	2·8
Total	1	2·8
This compares with
for the country as a whole.		2·97

Detailed Analysis of Causes of Deaths.

CAUSES OF DEATH		MALES	FEMALES
ALL CAUSES		169	175
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid ...	—	—
2	Measles ...	—	—
3	Scarlet Fever ...	—	—
4	Whooping Cough ...	—	—
5	Diphtheria ...	—	—
6	Influenza ...	1	—
7	Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—
8	Cerebrospinal Fever ...	—	—
9	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	8	4
10	Other Tuberculous Diseases ...	—	2
11	Syphilis ...	—	—
12	General Paralysis of the Insane ...	1	—
	Tabes dorsalis ...	—	—
13	Cancer Malignant Disease ...	18	27
14	Diabetes ...	1	12
15	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc. ...	12	15
16	Heart Disease ...	51	49
17	Anenrysm ...	1	1
18	Other Circulatory Diseases ...	5	13
19	Bronchitis ...	3	2
20	Pneumonia (all forms) ...	5	4
21	Other respiratory diseases ...	2	—
22	Peptic Ulcer ...	—	—
23	Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years) ...	—	—
24	Appendicitis ...	2	—
25	Cirrhosis of Liver ...	—	—
26	Other diseases of Liver, etc. ...	—	4
27	Other Digestive Diseases ...	2	5
28	Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	5	1
29	Puerperal Sepsis ...	—	—
30	Other Puerperal Causes ...	—	1
31	Congenital Debility, Premature Birth ...	10	4
	Malformations, etc. ...	—	—
32	Senility ...	11	17
33	Suicide ...	2	—
34	Other Violence ...	6	4
35	Other Defined Causes ...	23	10
36	Causes Ill-defined or unknown causes...	—	—
Special Causes (included in 35 above)			
	Small-pox	—	—
	Poliomyelitis	—	—
	Polioencephalitis	—	—

HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Nursing Arrangements. The district and parish nurses carry out the work of attending the sick. Additional assistance is available from the County Council's Emergency Nursing Staff for cases of ophthalmia neonatorum and puerperal sepsis.

No special nursing facilities otherwise for infectious disease except for those cases removed to the Isolation Hospital.

The District nurses are supported by local, private and voluntary associations, the County Council making grants to all districts.

There are 25 midwives practising in the district, none of whom are employed by Public Health Authorities.

Laboratory Work. The greater part is now sent to Dr. F. D. M. Hocking's Laboratory, Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro.

Occasional use is made of the Clinical Research Association of Adelphi, London. A free supply of diphtheria antitoxin is available for cases unable to afford it. Also a free supply of antitoxin will be provided on request for immunisation of children whose parents are unable to afford payment.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

Adoptive Acts, Bye-laws and Regulations relating to Public Health :—

Infectious Disease Prevention Act 1880, adopted 1899.

Public Health Amendment Act 1890, adopted 1893.

Public Health Amendment Act 1907 adopted 1913, so amended by the Public Health Act, 1936.

Housing (Rural Workers) Act 1926.

Such sections as are applicable to Rural District Bye-Laws :—

- i. With respect to new building, 1st July, 1896.
- ii. With respect to cleansing of foot ways and the cleansing of earth closets, ash pits, private and cesspools, adopted 1914.
- iii. With respect to nuisances, adopted 1914.
- iv. Registrations and Licensing of Slaughter Houses: Sections 169 and 170 Public Health Act 1878, adopted 1924.

Regulations under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order, 1895.

Registration of Ice Cream Manufacturers and Vendors, County of Cornwall Act 1929, adopted 1930.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

i. Fever. All cases of infectious disease, other than Small-pox, needing hospital treatment, have been admitted to the City Isolation Hospital which is situated in Moresk Road, Truro, and has 26 beds in 5 wards.

ii. Tuberculosis. Tehidy Sanatorium near Camborne is available for the district; accommodation does not appear to be at all adequate.

Three beds are available at Didworthy Sanatorium for cases that live in Truro Rural District, however, little use is made of them as few will go so far from their homes.

A most serious defect is the absence of any special accommodation for advanced and infectious cases.

iii. Maternity. A ward containing five beds is now available for special cases where home or other conditions necessitate hospital treatment, at the Women's Hospital Redruth.

There is now a Children's Ward with 10 beds in the Royal Cornwall Infirmary. This accommodation is inadequate.

An Orthopædic ward has also been opened in the Royal Cornwall Infirmary with 14 beds.

There are also 8 Ophthalmic beds in the Hospital.

The Royal Cornwall Infirmary is available for surgical and a limited number of medical cases, 49 beds. There is not adequate accommodation for medical cases.

A few patients from the western part of the district find their way to the Miner's and Women's Hospital, Redruth.

Chronic sick are taken into the Public Assistance Institution, Redruth. This is outside the area and difficult for relatives to get at.

The same Institution also provides accommodation for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children.

The Rosemundy Home situated at St. Agnes and supported by voluntary effort is for unmarried mothers. There are 16 beds. Girls are kept there for 6 to 12 months and trained for domestic service with much success,

The Council does not support any of the hospitals in any way except the Fever ones.

The Bodmin Mental Hospital provides the accommodation for mental cases. Mentally deficient children are sent to The Retreat, St. Columb.

Puerperal Fever and Pyrexia. There is no recognised place to which cases can be moved, in case of need, nearer than Plymouth. The only aid for such cases is in the form of part-time attendance from a nurse supplied from the Emergency Nursing Staff of the County Council. There should be hospital accommodation available for such cases when needed. The life of the unfortunate mother is jeopardised when treatment has to be carried out in a poverty stricken cottage without any conveniences.

X Ray, ophthalmic and massage departments exist at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary. The cost of travelling to and from the outlying districts prevents many patients from having proper treatment.

Ambulance Facilities. i. That belonging to the Home Ambulance Service of the Orders of St. John and British Red Cross Society, stationed at Truro, is available for non-infectious and accident cases. A limited part of the area make use of that at Redruth. Further facilities are badly needed in such a scattered district, especially in the summer months.

ii. Infectious cases. A special Ambulance for such cases is used jointly by the Council and Truro City Council. This is kept at the Truro City Isolation Hospital.

There are no treatment centres or clinics in the area run by the Council ; this work is carried out by the County Council, whose clinics are either in Truro or Redruth and Camborne.

Further hospital accommodation for surgical and medical cases is badly needed, also for children's diseases, so that beds may be available to keep some, if not all, cases of tonsils and adenoids in for at least a night after operation.

Beds should be available for old chronic and cancer cases preferably at not too great a distance from their homes and relatives.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA :—

WATER SUPPLY.

The summer of 1938 again found the populous parts of the area dependent on emergency sources.

In June it was found necessary to commence pumping from the emergency source at Mount to maintain a constant supply at Perranporth and the surrounding district of the parish of Perranzabuloe.

This continued until late autumn when the yield at the other sources—Silverwell and Golla—were sufficient to cope with the demand.

At St. Mawes, the emergency source at Trethem had to be brought into use in May month and pumping continued until November.

At St. Agnes a shortage was feared, largely on account of the extension of the water mains to parts of the parish which were added at the time of the Cornwall Review Order. Here it was decided to utilize a source at Mevagissey and Pumping Plant, Catchment Tanks etc., were installed as well as laying a Flying Main to connect with the main at Mount Hawke.

In all three cases the water thus provided was sufficient to maintain a constant supply.

At Flushing the supply was "cut off" for many months by night.

The Council have under consideration the provision of piped supplies to Newlyn East, Cubert, Chacewater, Perranarworthal and Probus. The places are badly in need of such an essential service.

The other parts of the area, which are more rural, are supplied with water by private and public wells.

Water Analysis. Frequent samples are taken of the public water supplies throughout the area, and submitted to the Analyst for (1) Bacteriological Examination, (2) Chemical Analysis. 55 such samples were taken during the year.

Only one source is being chlorinated—that at St. Mawes which is brought in as an emergency supply, and frequent samples are taken of this, and the "bulked" supply of this place.

In few instances there were samples which the Analyst considered not up to standard and in such cases the people were warned to boil the water before drinking.

Improvements have been carried out to several wells which supply the smaller villages and hamlets and extensions have been made to the piped supplies, particularly that at St. Agnes.

Rivers and Streams. No complaints have been received or made respecting the pollution of rivers or streams.

Closet Accommodation. 26 conversions from Middens and Earth Closets to Water Closets have been carried out during the year without assistance from the Council.

Public Conveniences. The Public Conveniences maintained by the Council at St. Agnes, (4). Portscatho and St. Mawes, have justified the erection of same. They are by no means "self supporting" but have met the need of the "self respecting". It is contemplated that in the near future such Conveniences will be provided in other parts of the area, amongst them being Portloe and Holywell.

Scavenging. Collection of House Refuse and Street Sweeping.

Systematic weekly collection of house refuse is carried out in larger villages in the district and in some of the smaller hamlets the collection is every fortnight.

This service is constantly being extended and one is gratified to find on approaching the villages and hamlets that the wastrels abutting the highway are not disfigured with all kinds of refuse as was the case some 10 or 12 years ago, that is, before the Council undertook to collect the refuse.

The refuse is disposed of on dumps which are controlled.

Road sweeping is carried out on the streets of the larger villages. In some of the seaside places, twice a week in the summer season, and weekly during the remainder of the year.

Drainage and Sewerage. Extensions of existing Sewerage schemes continue to be made as the erection of new buildings make the same necessary. At Perranporth and St. Mawes such extensions have been made, and also at St. Agnes.

Conservancy. The only place in the area in which the Council undertake the collection and disposal of night soil, etc., is at Flushing.

Life Saving Appliances. The Council provides and maintains Lifebuoys and lines at the various places on the sea coast within the district.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area. 2846 visits have been paid in connection with the duties as Sanitary Inspector. This figure does not include inspections made under the Housing Acts, which are referred to later in this report.

Camping Sites. There were 13 Licences issued to persons to use land for Camping purposes and Licences in respect of 51 Moveable Dwellings.

There are also a large number of sites—field on Farm—which are casually used for Camping purposes, but they are not subject to Licencing on account of not being so used for 42 consecutive days or any 60 days in twelve months.

It is estimated that in August month the number of people camping in the district would be between 700 and 800 in the licensed sites. In addition a very large number camp here and there spending a night or two and moving on.

Special Classes of Premises and Occupations subject to control by the Council :—

The Manufacture and Vendors premises connected with Ice Cream are registered with the Council under the County of Cornwall Act, 1929.

Underground Sleeping Rooms. There are no known underground rooms habitually used as sleeping places in the area.

Rag Flock Act. There are no premises in the area to which the Act is applicable.

Swimming Pools and Baths. There is only one Swimming Pool in the area, and this is situate at Porthtowan. The water of which is changed naturally by the tides twice in twenty-four hours.

Eradication of Bed Bugs. The Council are never called upon to deal with this pest. It is non-existent in the area.

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections, (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers Prosecuted. (4)
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	24		Nil
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries)	60	4	Nil
Workplaces... .. (Other than Outworkers' premises)			
Total	84	4	Nil

2—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces

Particulars (1)	Number of defects			Number of Offences in respect to which Prosecutions were instituted (5)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—</i>				
Want of cleanliness ...	4	4		
Want of ventilation ...				
Overcrowding ...				
Want of Drainage of floor				
Other nuisances ...				
Sanitary Accommodation } Insufficient unsuitable or defective. Not separate for sexes.				
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts :—</i>				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouses. (101)				
Other offences ... (Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921.)				
Total ...	4	4	Nil	Nil

Schools. The same remarks have again to be reported. Progress continues to be slow in providing the Schools with good lighting and drinking water. Improvement in sanitary conveniences could be well carried out in some cases.

The higher the standard set the children, the better theirs will be in later years.

HOUSING.

General Observations.

This very important side of a Local Authority's duty continues to grow rapidly year by year, as is natural, and whilst the erection of new houses by the Council must continue by reason of the need for such houses under the legislation so far introduced, the systematic inspection of houses occupied by person of the working classes, and the recording of such inspections remains of paramount importance.

This duty has been steadily continued, and some very interesting conclusions may be drawn from the particulars obtained.

One rather disturbing feature of note is the gradual absorption of working class houses in the more beautiful parts of the District, (particularly near the coast) by people from other parts of the country for use as summer dwellings, which naturally results in a scarcity of such houses for the poorer classes, who are in many cases agricultural workers.

The Local Authority is powerless to prevent the sale of such cottages, and it is natural that an owner would sell his property if offered an inflated price, which is quite usual.

The crisis of September was responsible for a number of sales of this description, and it is quite true to say that cottages changed hands at this time at quite fabulous amounts, twice the value of the property being common.

The recent Financial Provisions Act has given Rural Authorities a chance to provide new council houses to help to keep rural communities together, but the only people for whom grants under this Act can be obtained in the provision of additional houses, are agricultural workers, a class which is strictly defined. In many of the coastal communities, however, the class which is suffering from lack of housing accommodation is the fishing and allied trades workers. In these cases the Local Authority are not allowed any grant if new houses are built for the effected people.

The grants for Clearance Areas, Individually unfit houses, and houses built to relieve the overcrowding problem have all been reduced, and in these circumstances the Council is rather loathe to provide more houses than is absolutely necessary.

There has been revealed by the routine inspection of properties, quite a number of very old and in some cases, very badly preserved cottages, and in one particular district the owner of several of these cottages signified his intention of pulling them down rather than spending the money necessary to put them in a thorough state of repair, because of the fact that the rent he could eventually get for them would not amount to the interest on the money he would have expended.

There are still a number of back to back houses existing in very good repair, and occupied almost in every case by one or two elderly people for whom they seem to be particularly suited, as their health goes not appear to suffer in any way, and the rent is very low.

Regarding the scattered single detached cottages throughout the District, although most of these are dry and warm, there are still some of them which are situated in low lying positions or built into the sides of hills, which suffer greatly, in winter time particularly, from dampness.

The proofing of these cottages against moisture is very difficult, and in some cases almost impossible, because of the material of which they are built — in many cases the old Cornish cob — and the lack of any horizontal damp courses in their structure. Some relief has been obtained in the cases of houses built into hillsides by digging a dry area between the cottage and the country wall to well below the inside floor level, and concreting the sides and bottom to form a channel to take off the surplus moisture.

This does not prevent the rising of moisture inside the wall of the house however, and it is this difficulty which remains a problem.

In one case where a house had been built for perhaps a hundred years at the bottom of a hill, when suddenly, one winter, water commenced to ooze through the concrete floor in the living room, and gradually became worse and worse until no less than seven springs were flowing inside the house, and making their way out through the front door. The tenant of the house had to be moved and the house demolished.

In the various small communities in the District are many small cottages which appear to have lived their life and require constant attention in minor repairs, and although some work has been done by way of grants to owners of such properties to reconstruct them, others seem to take the whole of the rent obtained in repair bills. Sentimental interest of the owner is in some cases the only factor which keeps them up to standard.

During the recent years, the common amenities of life have been receiving more and more attention, and it is the aim of the Council to see that every house, however small, has facilities for household washing, cooking and food storage.

Good closet accommodation and the supply of adequate quantities of good water together with efficient drainage are in my opinion necessities of prime importance in addition to light and dry buildings. The substitution of water closets for privy middens and pail closets, where possible, is the constant aim, and in some cases it has even been possible to persuade owners to substitute chemical closets in place of the ordinary pails, where water in sufficient quantity could not be obtained for the use of water closets.

Privy middens, which are without any doubt the breeding places of vermin of all descriptions, are gradually being eliminated, even though pail closets have to be in some cases their substitute.

Much good can come of the regular lime washing of the outsides of old cottages, and where possible, occupiers are being persuaded to undertake this duty twice a year, but there still remain a number of thatches which are not kept trim and neat, and are soon the home of birds and rats.

There is no doubt that these old cottages have a pleasing appearance, and thatch has a lot to be said in its favour, such as its warmth in the cold weather, but on the other hand it is expensive to maintain, and as has been already mentioned, it harbours vermin, and on top of this the insurance premium of a thatched house against fire is very great. Under these circumstances, owners of such properties can often see the wisdom of substituting an asbestos slated roof when the thatch has become dilapidated, and it is usually easy to persuade an owner to add a few inches to the height of the rooms when the roof is being converted, one or two rows of concrete blocks being cheap and easy to erect. The occupants of such houses appreciate the extra comfort which is given to them by such means, and in several cases it has been very gratifying to see the increase in cleanliness inside an old house which has been given greater interior light and air space.

Shortage of Cottages.

I have already mentioned the shortage of the lower rented type of cottage in the District, but I feel that this is a point which must be stressed because of its importance.

Apart from the actual buying of properties by people from other parts of the country, there are several owners of properties who keep small cottages empty during the winter months so that they may let them during the summer months to visitors who pay more during these months than the owner could ever hope to obtain from an all the year round tenant of the working class. There has also been a large amount of misrepresentation when such cottages are advertised "to let" in the newspapers of the larger towns and cities and there are constant complaints to the Housing Department by visitors in summer time when it is found that everything is not as it has been pictured.

The speculative builder has almost entirely ceased to build the working class type of house in this neighbourhood, as he finds he can sell or let houses which cost about £600 much more to his own advantage.

The remarkable high cost of building in this part of the country is again a factor which militates against the provision of houses in any quantity, and when it is seen that bricks (to take one item) are three times as costly in this District as in Plymouth it will be seen that this is a big consideration.

The District Council are hoping to build a number of houses under the Financial Provisions Act of 1938, but these will only be available for agricultural workers, and are to be reserved for the housing of none but these workers.

As has already been mentioned earlier in this report, grants from higher Authorities have been reduced for the provision of new Council houses which are to be built to rehouse families from Clearance areas or Individual Unfit houses. Under these circumstances it will be seen that houses which should be built to meet the ordinary needs of the population, and which would receive no grant, would have to be let at a fairly high rent if they were to be anything but a burden on the rates, and the families who are most in need of such houses could not afford to pay such rents.

Houses to let at low rentals are greatly needed by persons of the working classes in this District.

Provision of New Houses.

During the past year, building for the purpose of rehousing overcrowded families has been completed, and there are now no overcrowded houses in the District.

The whole of the houses also to be built for the purpose of rehousing families from Clearance Areas under the Council's five year programme have also been completed, but there are another eight still in building which form an addition to the original scheme.

The complete schemes number ten houses for the abatement of overcrowding, and thirty houses for the rehousing of families from Clearance Areas, and from the favourable comments of the new tenants, and from the close inspection made of them by the members of the Housing Committee, it is realized that the Council has now a number of well built houses of good workmanship, designed in a pleasing and practical manner.

Statistics.

The overcrowding standard which was laid down by the Ministry of health in 1935 is still in force, and has not yet been superceeded by a standard which one feels would be more suitable for houses in a rural area such as this, and one finds there are still families which, although not overcrowded from a legal point of view, are grossly overcrowded from a moral one. The fact that living rooms were included in the accommodation which could be used for sleeping purposes, was responsible for the crowding into bedrooms of far more persons than ought to be allowed.

The District Council is, however, powerless to act in these cases, and a standard which makes use only of rooms which are habitually used as bedrooms should be substituted.

Houses at the seaside and in other like places are in constant danger of overstepping the standard, and it is only by frequent inspections and constant warnings to owners and occupiers that the standard has been enforced.

It was pointed out in my last report that the statistics then compiled with regard to the occupants of houses might prove of considerable value in case of any national emergency, and it has since been proved, for the Government called upon Local Authorities to make an enumeration of the accommodation available in their districts during the latter months of the year, it was only found necessary to obtain the correct figures for houses which had changed occupiers.

1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year 1938 :—

1. (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	782
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose				921

2.	(a) Number of dwelling houses (including under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Reg. of 1925 and 1932.	422
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	564
3.	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	26
4.	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceeding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	147
2.	Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notice :	
	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ...	131
3.	Action under Statutory Powers during the year :	
	(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	3
	(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	
	(a) by owners	3
	(b) by Local Authority in default	Nil
	(b) Proceedings under the Public Health Acts:-	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ...	Nil
	(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices	
	(a) by owners	Nil
	(b) by Local Authorities in default	Nil
	(c) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:-	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil

- (2) Number of dwelling houses demolished
in pursuance of Demolition Orders Nil
- (d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :-

(1) Number of separate tenements or
underground rooms in respect of
which Closing Orders were made ... Nil

(2) Number of separate tenements or
underground rooms in respect of
which Closing Orders were deter-
mined, the tenement or room having
been rendered fit ... Nil

4. HOUSING ACT, 1936 - PART IV - OVERCROWDING

(a) (1) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the
end of the year ... Nil

(2) Number of families dwelling therein ... Nil

(3) Number of persons dwelling therein ... Nil

(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding
reported during the year .. Nil

(c) (1) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved
during the year ... Nil

(2) Number of persons concerned in such
cases . . . Nil

(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling
houses have again become overcrowded
after the Local Authority have taken steps
for the abatement of overcrowding... Nil

Milk and Dairies. The number of persons and premises Registered under the Milk and Dairies Order continues to increase year by year. The farmer and small holder being glad to avail himself of the quick cash return for this commodity as compared with the other branches of his business—general farming and stock feeding and raising.

Premises are being brought up to a better standard and advice is given as to how to accomplish this in old cowhouses. Quite a number of new cowsheds have been constructed on Farms during the year.

Increasing numbers of producers are being granted Licences by the County Council for Tuberculin Tested and Accredited Milk.

The are no Pasturising Plants in the district.

Meat. Frequent visits are paid to Slaughterhouses and in the majority of cases the places are well conducted. The exceptions in every case being that of the Registered premises.

The Licenced Slaughterhouses have to attain a fairly high standard of construction etc., before the Council will grant a Licence.

Six quarters of Bovines, affected with localized Tuberculosis were condemned. A large number of Pigs Heads were also seized for the same reason.

No figures of the number of animals slaughtered in the area are available, but it would run into many thousands annually. There being a number of wholesale slaughterhouses given over entirely to killing for the London and Provincial Markets.

A system of some Central Abbatoir is the only satisfactory means of dealing with the question in a large Rural area.

Infectious Disease. 45 visits were paid to cases of infectious disease. The year under review must be looked on as an exceptional one perhaps in part due to the peculiar climatic conditions which prevailed.

The first five months of the year were exceptionally dry and mild and the incidence of all types of disease very low. Influenza was not widespread and of a very mild nature with only one death as against 9 the previous year.

The Scarlet Fever incidence was again very low and the type unusually mild. The cases of diptheria were of persons who contracted the disease outside the district.

The exact cause of the one case of paratyphoid could not be discovered, notifications of pneumonia were lower and perhaps not quite accurate record of the incidence of the illness in the area when the mortality is noted.

Puerperal Pyrexia notifications have risen, but it is very important to realise that this includes notifications of all women having fever, as defined for the purpose, from whatever cause within three weeks of childbirth.

The notifications of erysipelas show a further fall perhaps in part due to the use of the new drug Sulphanilamide. The one case of cerebrospinal meningitis occurred in a school boy who had been to a Pantomime a day or two previously.

When an epidemic exists cases where there is overcrowding, extreme poverty or inability to isolate adequately are those removed to hospital as well as those more severe cases needing skilled nursing.

No use has been made of the Schick or Dick Tests during the year.

No vaccinations have been performed under the 1917 Public Health Regulations.

Cancer, The study of the incidence of this disease in age groups and also sites for primary growths is interesting as will be seen from the following figures :—

Age Groups	Total Cases		Digestive Tract.		Generative Tract.		Skin etc.	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M	F
1—30 years	—		—	—	—	—	—	—
30—40 „	2		2	—	—	—	—	
40—50 „	1	2	1	—	—	2	—	
50—60 „	4	7	3	2	—	2	1	3
60—70 „	4	8	4	1	—	5	—	2
70—80 „	5	9	5	7	—	1	—	1
80—90 „	2	—	2	—	—		—	
over 90 „	—	1	—	1	—		—	
Totals.	18	27	17	11	—	10	1	6

These figures show the amazing preponderance of growths of the digestive system in men, the earlier and more even incidence through the middle periods of life. The preponderance of generative tract cases in women between 40 and 70 years and the sudden swing over to the alimentary system afterwards.

The number where the growth arose elsewhere than the two systems mentioned is noteworthy in the women, also the big difference in mortality, 50% greater in women than men. This must indicate a greater incidence in women which appears to be largely due to the generative system cases.

Survey of the districts in which deaths occurred does not appear to be particularly helpful.

An increasing number of patients have been to Plymouth for radium treatment and in some cases cost and the difficulty of getting to and fro in the day are big deterrants. There is a panel of medical men in the area who are prepared to give lectures on this disease.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis during 1938)

DISEASE	Total cases Notified.	Cases admit- ted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Small-Pox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	12	12	—
Diphtheria	2	2	—
Enteric (including paratyphoid)	1	1	—
Pneumonia	14	—	9
Puerperal Pyrexia	8	—	—
Erysipelas	2	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis	1	1	—

An analysis of the notified cases under age groups give interesting figures :-

Age Group.	Scarlet Fever.	Diph- theria.	Enteric.	Puer- peral Pyrexia.
Under 1	—			
„ 2	1			
„ 3	—			
„ 4	—			
„ 5	—			
5—10	8			
10—15	1		1	
15—20	—			1
20—25	—			3
25—35	4	1		3
35—45	—			1
over 45 years	—			

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM

Cases.			Vision Unimpaired.	Vision Impaired.	Total Blindness	Death
Notified.	Treated.					
	at Home	Hospital				
2	2	—	—	—	—	—

Prevention of Blindness

No action taken under Section 66 of the Public Health Amendment Act

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1938.

Age Periods.		NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0—1	...								
1—5	...								
5—10	...								
10—15	...	1			1				
15—20	...	2	2				2		1
20—25	...	1			1	2			
25—35	...						1		1
35—45	...	2	1			1			
45—55	...	6	2			2			
55—65	...	2	1			2	1		
65 upwards	...					1			
TOTALS	...	14	6		2	8	4		2

Tuberculosis. For 1938 there has been little change either notifications or deaths or in the sex distribution.

Again the most noteworthy feature is the high proportion of males who are notified in middle life, of these several have been miners and their health consequently impaired and they go down hill rapidly.

The large number of deaths each year in proportion to notifications make it very probable that many mild cases are never diagnosed or notified. The stigma of being labelled T.B. keeps many from seeking advice earlier.

Notifications before death at 80% shows an improvement; figures with such small numbers are misleading.

The results of Sanatorium treatment are improving especially where a longer stay is possible.--There are bound to be some cases which seem to be suitable for such treatment which fail to respond and quickly go down hill. Consequently the critics are inclined to point out the failures and so prejudice others from taking advantage of the opportunity of going there should the need arise. However public opinion is more alive to the value of these sanatoria and adverse criticism less frequent.

The problem of the working man or woman and the mother of a family who returns home after a stay away for some months is a very real one; all too often the stress of life is too much and they relapse and go down hill rapidly.

Better housing and working conditions coupled with a public who are alive to the causes and danger of this disease should continue to lessen the incidence and mortality.

A. RADBURNE FULLER.

